

Texas High Plains Cotton Crop Progresses

Friday, July 28, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

July is winding down and the Texas High Plains cotton crop continues to progress, and forecasted rainfall over the next several days definitely would give the crop a boost.

Abandonment estimates from early-season hail and wind damage remain at about 20 percent across the PCG 41-county service area, based on discussion at PCG's Advisory Group meeting earlier this morning.

Hot, dry weather has encouraged development, although a rain certainly would be welcome. Conditions range from poor to excellent across the region, as some later-planted cotton has struggled a little more under the elements. In some locations, though, growers are making growth regulator applications, and fields are green and lush with lots of blooms and good potential.

As for pests, weed control remains good overall and insect pressure has been low, but Lubbock-based Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist Dr. Suhas Vyavhare encouraged growers to begin actively monitoring for bollworms. He said in the Friday meeting that the worms are out there, although there have been no reports in this area of worms breaking through Bt cotton as they reportedly have in South Texas and other regions of the Cotton Belt.

Farm Bill Listening Session Scheduled for Monday, July 31 in San Angelo

The House Agriculture Committee will host a listening session at Angelo State University in San Angelo on Monday, July 31, beginning at 1 p.m. at the C.J. Davidson Conference Center inside the Houston Harte University Center, located at 1910 Rosemont Drive.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue will join HAC Chairman Mike Conaway and committee members for the listening session, titled "The Next Farm Bill, Conversations in the Field." These sessions are designed to gather input from farmers, ranchers and stakeholders across the country.

Livestreamed video and audio of the session will be at <https://agriculture.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=4007>.

Tickets Available for Celebrate Cotton Game

Friday, July 28, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Those in the cotton industry who want to see the Texas Tech Red Raiders take on Arizona State in the Celebrate Cotton game on Saturday, September 16, at Jones AT&T Stadium in Lubbock have a special promotional code to purchase tickets to that game.

Be sure you have your game tickets by visiting <http://bit.ly/TTUCottonGameTickets> and entering COTTON17, or calling the Texas Tech Ticket Office at (806) 742-TECH (8324) and asking for the Cotton Game special pricing.

Individual tickets start at just \$35 each with the promo code, and the game time is at 7 p.m. Season tickets also are still available for purchase.

PCG has proudly partnered with Texas Tech Athletics to establish this fun event that puts the High Plains cotton industry on a national stage. Cotton will be everywhere before and throughout the game, from displays around the stadium to promotion, special graphics and fun cotton facts during the game.

Special gameday T-shirts, sponsored by PCG and Scarborough Specialties, will be distributed (first-come, first-serve!) and cotton bales will line each entrance to the stadium, each with signage talking about what the cotton in that bale can make or how it impacts our economy. Farmers Cooperative Compress assists with providing the bales.

Gameday partners include Ag Texas Farm Credit Services; BASF; Bayer CropScience; Cavender's; City Bank; Crop Production Services; Deltapine; Netafim; NexGen; Hurst Farm Supply; Wylie Implement and Sprayers; Scarborough Specialties; and PCG.

The Celebrate Cotton Runway Show, featuring cotton products, will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, September 9, at South Plains Mall. Sponsorships are available for that event, and currently include South Plains Mall, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, and ARMtech.

A complete list of Celebrate Cotton gameday partners and additional events during Cotton Game week will be online soon at plainscotton.org. If you have an event to add to Cotton Game week, or for more information on any of these events, please call PCG at (806) 792-4904 or email maryjane@plainscotton.org.

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Southwest Cotton Producers to Learn from Georgia Operations

Monday, July 24, 2017

From the National Cotton Council

Eleven cotton producers from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas will see cotton operations in Georgia on July 30-August 4 as part of the National Cotton Council's 2017 Producer Information Exchange program.

Sponsored by Bayer via a grant to The Cotton Foundation, the P.I.E. program is now in its 29th year of helping its U.S. cotton producer participants improve yields and fiber quality – and has exposed more than 1,100 U.S. cotton producers to innovative production practices in regions different than their own. Specifically, the program helps producers improve their overall farming operation efficiency by: 1) gaining new perspectives in such fundamental practices as land preparation, planting, fertilization, pest control, irrigation and harvesting and

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2) observing firsthand the unique ways in which their peers are using current technology. The NCC's Member Services staff, in conjunction with local producer interest organizations, conducts the program, including participant selection.

This year's Southeast P.I.E. tour participants are: Texas – Colin Chopelas, Corpus Christi; David Weishuhn, Garden City; Jerry Sowder and Seth Sowder, both from Sudan; Tanner Hogue, Brownfield; Taylor Murrell, Tulia; Todd Straley, Plainview; Trevor Spain, Olton; and Wade Vaughn, Shallowater; Oklahoma – Chance Worrell, Altus; and Kansas – Jeff Preisser, Turon.

Following an orientation and overview on cotton production in the Southeast, the producers will begin their tour on July 31 in Columbus observing raw cotton spun into yarn at Swift Spinning and denim manufacturing at Denim North America. Later, they will travel to Vienna for a visit to Coley Gin and Fertilizer Company and then touring cotton farms in that area.

The group will begin the next day's activities in Tifton where they will see vegetable production at Lewis Taylor Farms and then peanut harvesting and tillage equipment at Kelley Manufacturing. They will visit the BCT Gin in Quitman and tour individual farms in the area before traveling to Moultrie for a presentation on the Sunbelt Ag Expo and then to Funston for a look at cotton production on Tom Stallings Farms.

On August 2, the group will travel to Albany for a presentation on agricultural aircraft manufacturing at Thrush Aircraft. Other activities that day include a look at cotton, peanut and corn production at Harvey Jordan Farms in Leary; a presentation on breeding cotton for tomorrow at Bayer's breeding facility in Dawson; and observing cotton, peanut and pecan production at RCL Farms in Bronwood.

The tour concludes on August 3 with a look at peanut processing at Premium Peanut in Douglas; a presentation on drip irrigation on cotton and peanut fields at Southeastern Gin Company in Surrency; and examining cotton and tobacco production at the FMR Burch Farm in Screven.

The season's final P.I.E. tour will have Southeast and Far West producers touring two cotton production regions in Texas on August 14-18.

Want the facts about the U.S. agriculture and farm policy?

<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>

Our View: Congress Needs More Ag Committees

Friday, July 21, 2017

From Farm Policy Facts

Workhorses rarely get the attention they deserve even though they are the ones that get the job done, especially in a place like Washington. And, when it comes to reducing federal spending, the Agriculture Committees are the real workhorses in town.

There is much ado about budgets these days. The Trump administration published its plan in May. The U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee released and advanced its proposal this week. Both budgets set lofty goals for deficit reduction and goals are good. But, what really matters is execution.

In the midst of an atmosphere of dysfunction, members of the Agriculture Committees diligently worked together to write a farm bill with bipartisan consensus that repealed and reformed policy, and cut federal spending in an open, transparent way. It was a long, exhausting process that culminated in the Agricultural Act of 2014, otherwise known as the 2014 Farm Bill.

At the time of passage, it was slated to save taxpayers \$23 billion. Today, those savings have increased fourfold, to more than \$100 billion. Meanwhile, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), other laws enacted in 2014 actually increased the deficit by \$24 billion. Since then other enacted bills have driven the deficit \$650 billion higher.

"This level of savings is especially impressive given that the entire farm bill comprises 1.7 percent of the total federal budget," wrote House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway concerning the more than \$100 billion in savings in a letter to the Budget Committee earlier this year.

Left out of the letter, but still very relevant, is the fact that agriculture also accounts for roughly 30 percent of the non-Medicare, non-defense mandatory sequester – the automatic spending cuts required under the 2011 Budget Control Act.

In other words, as Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts recently said, "Ag has already given at the store."

The Agriculture Committees may not be the perch that will land Members on the 24-hour news programs. And, the farm bill is not likely to make the evening news either. But, at the end of the day, the Agriculture Committees are the workhorses that get it done.

Conaway: Agriculture Stands to Benefit from NAFTA Renegotiation

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

From the House Ag Committee

Today, the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing to highlight opportunities for agriculture in the upcoming renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11) and members of the committee heard from various stakeholder groups on opportunities to achieve the best deal possible for American agriculture. Following the hearing, Chairman Conaway made the below remarks:

"Trade is vital to U.S. agriculture and nowhere is it more important than with our neighbors to the north and south. While I recognize there is a level of angst about renegotiating an agreement that has provided so many hard-fought gains, our nation stands to benefit from renegotiating a deal that provides additional market access and tightens trade enforcement. As the administration prepares to renegotiate NAFTA, I will continue working diligently with Amb. Lighthizer and Sec. Perdue to ensure we achieve the best deal possible for American agriculture."

Written testimony provided by the witnesses and more information from the hearing, including Chairman Conaway's opening statement and the archived webcast, are at <https://agriculture.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=4003>.

Editor's Note:

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email editor@plainscotton.org